

THE LOUNGE R.

[N^o CI.]

Saturday, Jan. 6. 1787.

Forſan et hæc olim meminiffe juvabit.

VIRG.

MY lateſt predeceſſor has compared the opening Paper of a periodical publication, to the firſt entry of a ſtranger into a room full of company. I think I may borrow his idea, and not unaptly liken the concluding Paper of ſuch a Work to a perſon's going out of ſuch a room. The ſame doubt whether he ſhall go or remain a little longer, the ſame reflections on what he may have ſaid in the openneſs of his heart during his ſtay in the company, the ſame ſolicitude about what people will think of him when he is gone, attend the periodical author and the gueſt. And though the eaſe of modern manners has relieved us in a great meaſure from the ceremonial of ſuch a ſituation; yet ſtill an author, like a perſon of conſequence, cannot with propriety take what is called a French leave of his company, but muſt formally announce his departure as an event in which the perſons he is about to quit are conſiderably intereſted.

The author of a periodical performance has indeed a claim to the attention and regard of his readers, more intereſting than that of any other writer. Other writers ſubmit their ſentiments to their readers, with the reſerve and circumſpection of him who has had time to prepare for a public appearance. He who has followed *Horace's* rule, of keeping his book nine years in his ſtudy, muſt have withdrawn many an idea which in the warmth of compoſition he had conceived, and altered many an expreſſion which in the hurry of writing he had ſet down. But the periodical Eſſayiſt commits to his readers the feelings of the day, in the language which thoſe feelings have prompted. As he has delivered himſelf with the freedom of intimacy, and the cordiality of friendship, he will naturally look for the indulgence which thoſe relations may claim; and when

he bids his readers adieu, will hope, as well as feel, the regrets of an acquaintance, and the tenderness of a friend.

There is somewhat of this regret, and somewhat of this tenderness, in the last farewell we take of any thing. That place must have been very unpleasant, that companion very disagreeable indeed, whom, after a long sojourn or society, we can leave without some degree of melancholy in thinking that we shall see them no more. Even that abodé, or that society, with which we have been for months or years disgusted and distressed, long habit and acquaintance, so ally to our minds, that we often wonder why we are so little rejoiced at the arrival of a period for which we have frequently wished; that our parting should rather be sad than gay, and bring us, amidst the reflections of relief, an involuntary feeling of regret.

But as the *Lounger* flatters himself that he has not been altogether an unentertaining, or at least not a disagreeable companion to his readers, he may hope for a parting on more favourable terms: that on the morning of next Saturday, they will miss his company at the accustomed time, as something which used to be expected with pleasure; and think of the papers which on that day of so many past weeks they have read, as the correspondence of one who wished their happiness, and contributed to their amusement.

If he may judge from what himself has experienced in similar circumstances, they will be apt to indulge a personification of the author of these sheets, and give him "a local habitation, and a name," according to the ideas they may have formed in the course of his performance. When such a writer has withdrawn himself from that sort of authority which he claimed for his opinions, that sort of credit which he assumed for his situation, we are naturally inclined to examine the reality of each; as at the death of an acquaintance, we talk with more precision and assurance than formerly, of his age, his character, and his circumstances. To ascertain, as well as to satisfy any such enquiry, the Authors of the *Lounger* will fairly unfold themselves; not individually, for that were to assume an importance to which they are not entitled; but they have an aggregate name, by which, like corporations, they can be known and impleaded: they are the same Society which, some years ago, published in this country their periodical Essays under the title of the *Mirror*.

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In making this declaration, they incur as much danger, perhaps, as they assume distinction. He who has some merit of ancestry to support, draws the attention more closely upon his own. During the course of this publication, they have sometimes been amused with the discovery of its inferiority to its predecessor; and have heard, with a mixture of mortification and of pride, some people express their regret, that the Authors of the *Mirror* did not write in the *Lounger*; and rescue it from the less able hands into which it had fallen. It may still indeed be said, that an author is often "sibi impar;" that a second work is seldom equal in merit to the first. But they may be allowed to indulge themselves in the belief, that great part of the criticism arose from a natural enough propensity to undervalue what has not yet been sanctioned by the general opinion; from that disposition, common in every thing, not to be satisfied merely with what is good, but with what is called good. Be this, however, as it may, the Authors of the two Works found themselves somewhere flattered by the remark, as a mother can but slightly resent the criticism of her daughter's beauty, when it only discovers that she herself was handsomer some twenty years ago.

When thus, like *Prospero*, they "break their staff," and lay aside the airy power they had assumed, they feel, like him, the loss of that society which the *Lounger* had raised around them. The visionary characters with which he had peopled their acquaintance, they cannot help regretting as departed friends; and it is not without a sigh that they dismiss *Peter* from his service. But they owe the confession to sincerity; and there is something more solemn in their obligation to this avowal now, because it is the last time they will have an opportunity of making it. Particular circumstances induce them to declare, that they will not again appear before the Public, as periodical Essayists, in any shape or under any name. If any future Work of that kind shall happen to come out, they will have no claim to its merits, nor responsibility for its defects.

It only remains for them to do justice to those correspondents to whose assistance they have been indebted during the course of their Work. To Correspondents they owe the following Papers. N^o 7.; the letter subscribed *Mary Careful*, in N^o 8.; N^{os} 11. 16. 19. 24.; the letters from *Theatricus*, in N^o 25.; from *Philomusus*, in N^o 42.; from *John Trueman*, in N^o 44.; N^o 45.; the letter signed *Almeria*, in N^o 46.; that subscribed *Hannah Waitfort*, in N^o 55.; N^{os} 60. 63. 70. 79. and the Poem in N^o 85.

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Of their readers, as well as their correspondents, they cannot take leave without a very sensible and lively regret. While they dictate this concluding paragraph, it is with a melancholy feeling they reflect, that it deprives them of an opportunity of cultivating that correspondence, and of committing to those readers the sentiments of their hearts; that it drops the curtain on their mimic state, and surrenders them to the less interesting occupations of ordinary life. Yet twice to have made a not unsuccessful excursion into this region of fancy and of literary dominion, is to have atchieved something which falls but to the lot of few. They can anticipate, with a venial degree of self-applause, the talk of their age, recalling the period of their publications with an old man's fondness, an author's vanity, and a Scot's pride; happy if any one of their number, who shall then be pointed out as a writer in the *Mirror* or the *Lounger*, need not blush to avow them as works that endeavoured to lift amusement on the side of taste, and to win the manners to decency and to goodness.

Speedily will be Published,

BY WILLIAM CREECH,

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